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ABSTRACT

Computers have become an essential tool in society. Early exposure to computers may help students gain the computer literacy that will be crucial for future success in the workplace. Access to computers at school and at home allows students to retrieve information, manipulate data, and produce results efficiently and in innovative ways. Examining the extent to which students have access to computers at school and at home may be an indicator of how well prepared students will be to enter an increasingly technological workplace. Between 1984 and 1996, the percentage of 4th, 8th, and 11th graders who reported using a computer at school at least once a week increased substantially. The youngest students were more likely than older students to report computer use in schools. In 1996, 79% of 4th graders, 91% of 8th graders, and 96% of 11th graders reported using a computer at home or at school to write stories or papers, a substantial increase from 1984. Students from high income families were more likely to report using a computer at home or at school than students from low income families. Computer use statistics are tabulated for 4th, 8th, and 11th graders. (AEF)

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ED 433 008

Student Computer Use Indicator of the Month

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National Center for Education Statistics
August 1999

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INDICATOR of the MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Student computer use

August 1999

Computers have become an essential tool in our society. Early exposure to computers may help students gain the computer literacy that will be crucial for future success in the workplace. Access to computers at school and at home allows students to retrieve information, manipulate data, and produce results efficiently and in innovative ways. Examining the extent to which students have access to computers at school and at home may be an indicator of how well- prepared students will be to enter an increasingly technological workplace.

- Between 1984 and 1996, the percentage of 4th-, 8th-, and 11th-graders who reported using a computer at school at least once a week increased substantially.
- The youngest students were more likely than older students to report that they used computers at school. In 1996, 72 percent of 4th-graders reported using a computer at school at least once a week, compared to 47 percent of 8th-graders and 50 percent of 11th-graders. However, 8th- and 11th- graders were more likely than 4th-graders to report using computers every day.
- In 1996, 79 percent of 4th-graders, 91 percent of 8th-graders, and 96 percent of 11th-graders reported using a computer at home or at school to write stories or papers, a substantial increase from 1984. The percentage of students who used a computer to learn things also increased between 1984 and 1996 for all three grades.
- Students from high income families were more likely to report using a computer at home or at school than students from low income families. Between 1984 and 1993, the percentage of students who reported using a computer at school increased by similar amounts across family income levels. However, the increase in the percentage of students who used a computer at home was higher for students from families with higher incomes.

Percentage of students who reported using a computer at school, by grade and frequency of use: 1984–96

Frequency	Grade 4						Grade 8						Grade 11					
of use	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996
Never	61.2	29.8	18.9	16.5	14.0	11.4	66.7	41.8	40.5	37.6	27.7	23.3	55.0	44.7	44.9	27.2	26.1	16.0
Less than once a week	12.5	17.4	14.5	22.0	15.8	16.3	17.0	22.2	19.3	23.9	26.9	29.2	20.9	24.0	26.5	31.5	30.9	34.2
Once a week	15.5	34.2	41.1	37.0	39.6	36.0	8.1	13.9	12.9	12.8	16.1	14.5	5.7	6.4	6.6	10.8	8.0	15.3
Two or three times a week	7.6	15.0	17.7	18.6	22.8	26.5	4.6	12.2	16.0	15.1	14.5	16.2	6.3	9.7	8.3	11.3	12.4	16.5
Every day	3.2	3.6	7.8	5.9	7.7	9.9	3.6	9.8	11.3	10.5	14.9	16.7	12.1	15.2	13.7	19.2	22.6	18.1

Percentage of students who used a computer at home or at school, by grade and reason for use: 1984–96

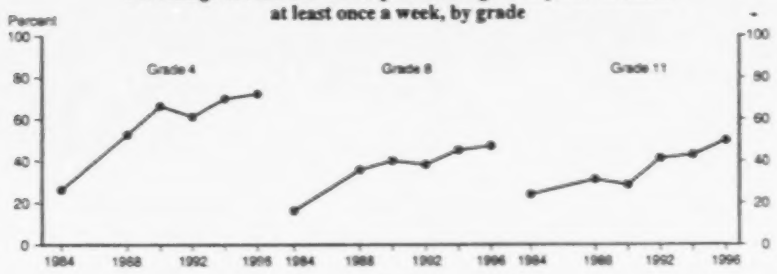
Reason for use	Grade 4						Grade 8						Grade 11					
	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1984	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996
To play games	71.8	79.0	84.5	82.8	87.4	89.7	84.1	85.3	83.7	84.7	86.8	89.1	75.7	78.9	79.0	78.4	76.6	83.6
To learn things	67.9	70.4	75.8	82.9	82.0	87.5	58.2	73.7	70.5	72.8	76.4	82.6	54.6	65.3	64.5	72.3	70.7	80.2
To write stories or papers	23.4	39.6	48.6	56.9	68.3	79.2	15.0	58.4	61.3	73.1	82.3	91.2	18.8	61.2	68.9	84.1	86.9	95.7

NOTE: Details may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

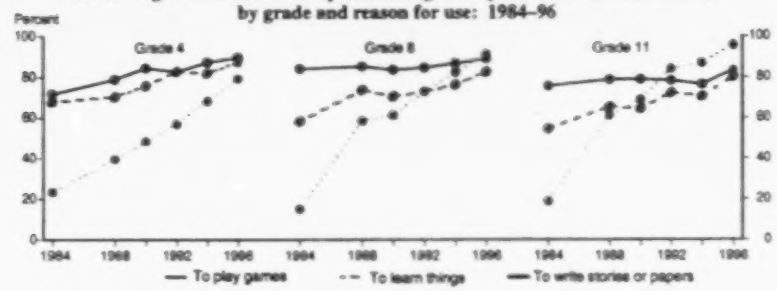
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Almanac: Writing, 1984 to 1996*, 1998.

Percentage of students who reported using a computer

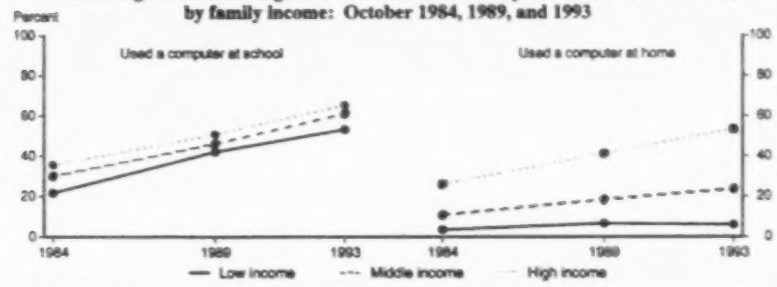
Percentage of students who reported using a computer at school at least once a week, by grade



Percentage of students who reported using a computer at home or at school, by grade and reason for use: 1984–96



Percentage of students in grades 7–12 who used a computer at school or at home, by family income: October 1984, 1989, and 1993



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Almanac: Writing, 1984 to 1996*, 1998. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

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